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RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY 0544  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ROME 001539

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/19/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [EFIN](#) [EAID](#) [SENV](#) [IT](#)

SUBJECT: ITALIAN SHERPA MASSOLO SEEKS USG VIEWS ON G8  
SUMMIT FORMAT

REF: A. ROME DAILY REPORT 12-5-08

- [¶](#)B. ROME 1484
- [¶](#)C. ROME 1327
- [¶](#)D. ROME 1510

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Elizabeth Dibble for reasons 1.4  
(b) and (d)

[¶](#)1. (C) Summary: Italian G8 Sherpa Giampiero Massolo told the DCM on December 15 that Italy wants to resist pressures to expand the G8 format during its 2009 Presidency. He asked whether the new U.S. Administration would favor another Major Economies leaders' Meeting (MEM) at the Summit to deal with climate change, and worried that some G8 members are becoming enamored of the G20 format. Italy is prepared to host both an MEM and a G20 finance meeting at the Summit itself if necessary. Massolo has proposed a later date than usual for the first Sherpa meeting (February 2-3, Naples), in part to give the new U.S. Administration time to organize its G8 team. Italy will seek to add Egypt to the G8 plus 5 session on the second day of the La Maddalena Summit (July 8-10, 2009) to accommodate PM Berlusconi's personal invitation to President Mubarak. End Summary.

Italy Adds Egypt to the G8 plus 5....

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[¶](#)2. (C) DCM, PolMin and Poloff met with MFA Secretary General and G8 Sherpa Ambassador Giampiero Massolo on December 15 to discuss Italy's recently-announced format for its G8 Presidency in 2009. Massolo said that despite the expanded format announced by PM Berlusconi on December 4 (Ref A), Italy wants to resist pressure from France and the UK (PM Brown, specifically) to broaden G8 participation (Ref B). He said that the inclusion of Egypt in the G8 plus 5 session was necessary to accommodate PM Berlusconi's personal invitation

to President Mubarak, but dismissed the rumor that Italy would invite the Arab League as an observer, saying it would be a very bad idea. (Massolo noted that he had raised the inclusion of Egypt at the last Sherpa meeting in Japan and met with no objections). Italy has proposed a later date than usual for the first Sherpa meeting (February 2-3, Naples), in part to give the new U.S. Administration time to organize its G8 team.

... But Resists Expansion into the G20

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¶3. (C) Massolo asked for U.S. input on two key questions: (1) the debate over the relationship between the G8 and G20 and (2) whether to hold another Major Economies leaders' Meeting (MEM) on climate change to follow the one held at the Toyako Summit. On the G8-G20 question, Massolo noted that in the wake of the November meeting of the G20 in Washington there are those even within the G8 who suggest that to remain relevant the G8 plus 5 should dissolve into the G20. In the debate among "articulators" and "enlargers," Italy counts itself among the first camp (along with Canada, Japan, Russia and - to a degree - Germany): those who want to defend the G13 format from encroachments from the G20. Among the G5, Brazil and Mexico are opposed to expansion, while China is drawn to the G20 because it would be less isolated there. Italy regards the G20 format as too unwieldy to deal effectively with the range of issues confronting the international community, and some G20 members are "manifestly out of tune" with the "like-minded" G8. He noted that the

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G20 gathered in November at the level of heads of government under the pressure of the global financial crisis, whereas the G13 meet by choice; it would be a shame to do subsume the G13 "just for the sake of choreography."

¶4. (SBU) Echoing concerns voiced by Italian Sous-Sherpa La Tella in a November meeting with EPA officials (Ref C), Massolo noted that Italy is willing to hold a Major Economies leaders' Meeting (MEM) (G8 plus 5 plus Australia, Indonesia, South Korea and the EU) to deal with climate change, as the Japanese did at the Toyako Summit, but the new U.S. Administration would have to be fully on board to bring developing countries into a useful dialogue on emissions. The MEM session at Toyako, he said, fell short of its goal; a follow-up meeting in Italy would have to "go the extra mile" in order to set the groundwork for a successful UN Climate Summit at Copenhagen in December 2009. Italy is prepared to hold a meeting of the Major Economies' negotiators on Energy Security and Climate Change in late February or early March, either before or after the preparatory meeting for the Environmental Ministerial (Ref D), if ME members feel it is useful.

Summit Format: Three Packed Days

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¶5. (SBU) Massolo confirmed that the format at La Maddalena would be a slightly expanded version of Toyako: Day 1 (July 8) will be the G8 members alone. Day 2 (July 9) will be the G8 plus G5 (China, India, Mexico, Brazil and South Africa), plus Egypt. The novelty that Italy proposes for this meeting (the last of the Heilegendamm Process meetings) is to hold it in formal session (as opposed to a working lunch) and produce a Summit Declaration, probably on principles of shared responsibility for growth and sustainable development.

¶6. (SBU) For Day 3 (July 10), Massolo listed a number of options: a G8 plus 5 plus Africa session, an MEM, and/or a G20 finance meeting - or all of the above. He said that Italy would like to host the by-now traditional tripartite G8 plus 5 plus Africa session, with the theme being shared responsibility between developed, emerging and developing countries in confronting global challenges. There would be no joint declaration for this session. Italy would also

leave room for an MEM session on climate change, with a declaration. If necessary, Italy could also accommodate a G20 Finance meeting, which some G20 members have suggested may be necessary if the London G20 meeting on April 2 fails to make the needed headway. Massolo implied that Italy would rather have the G20 in La Maddalena, safely within the G8 format, than see it hold a competing session (possibly at heads of government level) elsewhere.

¶ 7. (C) Comment: The GOI clearly feels under pressure from France and others to expand its Summit format or risk seeing the G8 become irrelevant on its watch. By offering a range of session formats, Italy appears to be hedging its bets that whichever format eventually triumphs will seek a stage at La Maddalena. The risk, however, is that by offering something for everybody, Italy will dilute the substance of the Summit - and bolster the arguments of those who say the G8 is irrelevant.

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